YUKON HEALTH &

SOCIAL SERVICES COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT

1996 - 1997

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR AND CO-CHAIR

THE MISSION STATEMENT OF THE COUNCIL IS

TO RECOMMEND AND PROMOTE ACTION THAT IMPROVE THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF YUKON PEOPLE

During the past year Council members have, at the request of the Minister of Health and Social Services and Justice, reviewed and supplied recommendations on various issues under consideration by the government. Council members have also provided recommendations to the Government as a result of broad range of presentations made to the Council by Yukon residents.

It is the belief of the Council that our consensus-based recommendations continue to provide a positive contribution towards improving the health and well-being of Yukon people. It is very important to acknowledge the efforts of past and present members whose dedication has, and continues to advance the mandate of the Council.

Sincerely,

David Buchan
Chair

Marry Ellen McCaffrey
Co-Chair

COUNCIL ACTIVITIES

COMMUNITY AWARENESS

- In keeping with the practice of previous years, efforts were made to ensure that the activities of the Council were accessible to all Yukon residents. Newspaper advertisements and posters in Yukon communities provided information about the Council, its meeting dates and agenda items. Council continued to encourage and accommodate requests from Yukon residents wishing to make presentations on any issues that fell within the Council's mandate.

- The Minutes of Council meetings were public documents and are circulated to individuals and organizations upon request. In this way, community awareness of Council activities is also enhanced.

HEALTH INVESTMENT FUND

- In 1996/97, Council continued to have representation on the committee that considers requests for funding from the Health Investment Fund. The designated member attends all regular meetings and provides quarterly updates to the Yukon Health and Social Services Council.

COUNCIL SUBCOMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

At the request of the Minister of Health and Social Services and the Minister of Justice, sub-committees were established to address specific issues. Council reviewed and provided comments on the following matters:

- Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse
- Adult Guardianship
- Young Offenders Facility
- Continuing Care, Home Care & Seniors' Care
- Operating Procedures for H&SS Council

PRESENTATIONS TO COUNCIL

During the course of the year, Council heard presentations from several organizations and individuals. The topics presented included the following:

FIRST NATIONS PERSPECTIVE ON MIDWIFERY

This presentation to Council was provided by a Tlingit elder from Teslin, who spoke about the many traditions around adolescence, childbirth and raising of children. These traditional ways included training for the mothers, exercise, eating traditional foods, and the involvement of community members in protecting children. The presenter noted that she would like to see traditional midwives working in communities, and agreed that having traditional midwives working in the hospital would be a good start.

VICTIM SERVICES

The co-presenters explained the services offered by Victim Services and provided information on training to work with victims. The program is based in Whitehorse but information, assistance and outreach to all Yukon Communities can be provided. Presently services are provided to victims of spousal assault, sexual assault, rape and robbery.

PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY PROGRAM, YUKON COLLEGE

This presenter advised the Council that the goal of the College program is to provide a coordinated approach to health education and safety training by working in partnership with the Yukon communities. The program provides health promotion/education and injury prevention programs and undertakes health promotion activities including heart health programs, tobacco reduction, food safe and workplace wellness.

TOUR OF THE WHITEHORSE GENERAL HOSPITAL

During the construction of the Hospital, Council requested permission to tour the building and make recommendations on issues concerning the future operation of the facility (three tours were conducted during the construction phase by Council members).

SECOND OPINION SOCIETY

This presenter advised Council that the Society had been established approximately four years ago by a group of people who had been patients in the formal mental health system. The Society offers people an alternative to the formal mental health system. In this presenter's opinion, what is often required is an advocate to work on behalf of clients. However, the Society does not function as an advocacy group since funding is not available to support that role.

WORKFORCE TRANSITION PROJECT

The co-presenters explained to Council the project goal is to establish a continuum of intervention services, ensure an effective transition from incarceration to the community, by providing vocational and residential support. This project was a joint effort between the Council For Yukon First Nations, Whitehorse Correctional Centre, Challenge Community Vocation Alternatives and Access Employment Services. The Project is designed to support positive resolutions to difficulties faced by clients, assistance with developing employment related skill and motivation.

YOUTH, JUSTICE AND PROTECTION OF THE COMMUNITY

This presenter provided Council with details of an alternative method of dealing with young offenders currently being used in New Zealand. The model is called Family Group Counseling. The model involves meeting with the offender, the offenders' family, the victim and support people for the victim, rather than going to court. At the meeting, a plan is developed for the offender to follow. Not only must the victim approve of the plan, but the victim also has veto over the plan. If a satisfactory conclusion cannot be reached in the family group counseling model, a case then proceeds to court. It was noted by the presenter this model has enjoyed a very high success rate in New Zealand.

WOMEN'S HEALTH

This presenter was from the medical community and spoke specifically on breast health. It was noted that a formal breast screening program is an essential component of the mammography program at Whitehorse General Hospital.

MAKING THE RIGHT CHANGES TO IMPROVE THE HEALTH OF CANADIANS

This presenter belonged to the Canadian Nursing Association, and provided an overview of the report on national health reform prepared by the Canadian Nursing Association (CNA). Essentially, the CNA supports the definition of needs by the community as a basis for the health system, and does not support the concept of a two-tier health system.

CONTINUING CARE FOR SENIORS

The administrator of the Thomson Centre outlined various levels of care that are available to seniors, and identified the facilities that presently provide care for seniors. With respect to the Thomson Centre, it was explained that the model of care used with Alzheimer's patients is called gentle care; this model ensures an entirely stress-free environment in which patients' days are normalized as much as possible. It was noted that some improvement has been evident in a number of patients under this model.

MARY HOUSE SHELTER PROGRAM

The Director explained the history of the house and outlined the programs currently offered. The Council was advised that Mary House would not be able to continue to operate their shelters in the future. The men's shelter is in poor repair and Mary House does not intend to do major renovations or to rebuild. The women's shelter is in better repair, but it has become clear that the kinds of services required by the women who come to the shelter are beyond the level of programming that the Mary House staff can provide (e.g. counseling, advocacy).

FEDERAL PAROLE SYSTEM

The Director of Community Corrections (Pacific Region), Corrections Services of Canada provided an overview of federal corrections and the federal parole system. It was explained that there are contracts with half-way houses for parolees, including one in Whitehorse where the Salvation Army has the contract. Council was advised that decisions about release of offenders on parole are made by the National Parole Board. The primary goal of the service is public protection which involves pro-active intervention.

ROTARY HOUSE

This member of the Rendezvous Rotary Club described one of their projects involving pregnant women in Yukon. Council was advised that Rotary Club presently provides funding for the accommodation for women who come to Whitehorse from the communities prior to giving birth. Council was also advised that the Rotary Club members are not sure they are in a position to continue to provide this services.

AIDS YUKON ALLIANCE

The Director of AIDS Yukon Alliance (AYA) outlined the programs and services provided by the organization. The organization promotes healthy lifestyles, targeting high risk groups and the general public, with culturally appropriate education and prevention programs on Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) and Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). AYA operates a needle exchange, provides free and confidential HIV tests, distributes condoms, offers a program for community resource workers and support to people with AIDS and their families.

OVERVIEW OF THE YUKON STATUS OF WOMEN COUNCIL'S PROJECT : "PUTTING WOMEN ON THE PUBLIC AGENDA"

The Council was advised by this presenter that women around the territory were surveyed and asked to identify the issues they consider of most importance and of most concern to Yukon women. Council was advised that poverty is of concern to a large number of women. Members were also provided with a summary of the key issues identified as a result of the survey.

HEALTH PROMOTION AND CHILDREN AT RISK

A representative from Health Promotion Branch, Health Canada provided Council with information about its health promotion programs targeted at children:

- Aboriginal Head Start Program
- Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program
- Community Action Program for Children, and
- Nobody's Perfect Parenting Program

UPDATE ON IMPLEMENTATION OF GENDER EQUITY POLICY

Council updated on the implementation of the Gender Equity Policy within the Department of Education. It was noted that a teacher resource guide has been developed and facilitators are being trained to support of implemention the policy in public schools.

MANDATORY REPORTING OF CHILD ABUSE

The Director of Child Care Services advised the Council that the Yukon is currently the only jurisdiction in Canada with no legislated mandatory obligation to report suspected child abuse. It was noted that, in practice, the Yukon is not entirely dissimilar to other jurisdictions where reporting is mandatory but where there are no complementary punitive legislated sanctions to deal with non-reporting.

MEETINGS

- Under its operating procedures, the Yukon Health and Social Services Council is committed to hold at least four meetings a year.

- In 1996/97, four regular meetings took place on the following dates:

    - May 31 & June 1, 1996
    - September 6 & 7, 1996
    - December 6 & 7, 1996
    - March 7 & 8, 1997

FINANCIAL STATEMENT 1996 - 1997

YUKON HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES COUNCIL

BUDGET:		$40,000.00
	Honoraria	$23,900.00
	Travel Costs	$ 4,165.66
	Meeting Expenses	$ 5,594.16
	Advertising/Community Awareness	$ 919.80
TOTAL EXPENDITURES:		$34,579.62
BALANCE:		$ 5,420.38

COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP AT MARCH 31, 1997

- David Buchan, Chair
- Mary Ellen McCaffrey, Co-Chair
- Valerie Benoit
- Rosemary Couch
- Laurent Cyr
- Shannon Evans
- Phillip Gatensby
- Beckey Scherer
- Belinda Stick
- Pat Martin
- Annie MacDonald
- Colleen Wirth

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